

Generous Living

(Acts 4:23-5:14)

Introduction

A) An example of selfish living

A California woman may have a multimillion dollar fortune headed her way after authorities found an estimated \$7 million worth of gold coins in her recluse cousin's home.

Walter Samasko Jr., 69, died in May due to heart problems and was not discovered until June when neighbors complained of a bad smell coming from his house. Samasko lived in Carson City, Nev., a city about 30 miles south of Reno.

When authorities went to clean out his home, they found boxes of gold coins in his home and garage. "He was quite a hoarder. He had boxes and boxes and boxes of things," Carson City Clerk Alan Grover told ABCNews.com. Grover said there were many containers of food and cans.

Grover said the coins were in boxes marked "books." There were also coins wrapped in aluminum foil and stored in ammunition boxes. There were Mexican, British and Austrian coins dating as far back as the 1870s. There was so much gold that Grover used a wheelbarrow to carry the fortune to his truck. The coins were first moved to a bank vault and now they have been moved to armored vehicles.

Grover's office estimated the worth of the coins at \$7 million based on the amount of gold. "We have to get it all appraised and come out with a real true figure," he said. He added that the final figure could potentially be even larger because some of the coins might be worth more than their face value.

B) An example of generous living

Bruno Serato moved from Italy to USA in 1980 as a poor immigrant who didn't speak a word of English. He began his career working as a dishwasher. Working hard, he dreamed of owning his own restaurant. He achieved his dream with hard work and dedication. He now serves Italian food in his own restaurant called the White House in Anaheim. Celebrities and politicians have eaten at his restaurant. But his favourite customers are the ones that he feeds for free - the so-called "motel children" of Orange County. They are the children whose parents are too poor to afford them decent, regular meals.

The story began on April 18th, 2005. Bruno's mother came to visit him from Italy. As part of her tour of California, they visited the Boys & Girls Club charity in Anaheim. There, they saw a little boy eating potato chips. The director told them that those chips were all he had for dinner - his family was too poor to afford him a full meal. His mother then came up with the idea that started it all - to give the children who need it food from Bruno's restaurant. Bruno, inspired by her idea, then decided to start his own charity that offers free meals to children in need. He called it Caterina's Club, after his mother.

Every night, the White House makes a meal of fresh pasta and sauce and sends it to the kids at the Boys & Girls Club in a van. Bruno has given away hundreds of thousands of meals so far. Some nights his restaurant struggled, having more children to feed than paying customers. But Bruno kept going and says he will never stop giving to the children, as it is his passion in life.

C) Contextualize Acts 4:23-5:14.

D) Contextualize this sermon in the Acts Sermon Series

I. Genuine Generosity

Principle: *A genuine relationship with Christ is validated by a generous spirit.*

A) Shared hearts (v. 32)

The Jerusalem church was a growing, thriving group because of their deep commitment to god and one another.

B) Shared grace (v. 33)

The entire congregation shared in the privilege of the active hand of God being upon them.

C) Shared possessions (v. 34-37)

When a person had a special need, others aided in meeting that need. Instead of an “individual” mentality, they had a “corporate” or “family” mentality.

II. Blatant Hypocrisy

A) Pretentious actions (v. 1-2)

Ananias and Sapphira sought to appear to be something they were not. They were hypocrites. *Hypocrite* was an ancient Greek word that was associated with Greek plays and the masks worn by the actors.

Instead of elaborate cosmetics, the Greek actors would utilize masks. One mask had a big smile and was used when the actor quoted lines of comedy. A second mask had a frowning face and was used when the actor quoted lines of tragedy. The actor performing two opposite roles was called a *hupokris*, meaning ‘one who hides behind a mask.’

Their gift was pretentious in two respects . . .

1) Their motive was pretentious

2) Their gift was pretentious. They led the congregation to believe that they too gave all, just as Barnabas had given all.

NOTE: Come as you are, just don't stay that way!!

NOTE: I'm not going to church and be a hypocrite. THEN CHANGE!!

B) Presumptuous attitude (v. 3-4)

C) Perilous results (v. 5-11)

III. Divine Intervention

A) Power (v. 12)

B) Purity (v. 13)

C) Prosperity (v. 14)

Conclusion

God was generous toward you when he gave Jesus.